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SEVENTH REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In my sixth report to the Security Council on the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) dated 4 June 1999, I indicated my intention to revert to the Council with recommendations on an expanded UNOMSIL presence in Sierra Leone with a revised mandate and concept of operations in the event of a successful outcome to the negotiations between the Government of Sierra Leone and rebel representatives in Lomé (S/1999/645, paras. 52-57). By paragraph 4 of its resolution 1245 (1999) of 11 June 1999, the Security Council took note of my intention and underlined that security conditions should be considered in any further eventual deployment.

2. On 7 July 1999, representatives of the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF/SL) signed a peace agreement in Lomé after several weeks of negotiations (see S/1999/777). The present report sets out the main provisions of the agreement and contains recommendations for the immediate measures that should be taken to strengthen the Mission. Such measures would enable the United Nations to provide initial support to the process of implementation. Following discussions with all interested parties, I intend to submit additional recommendations to the Security Council on the overall activities of the United Nations, including the mandate and structure of a United Nations peacekeeping presence in the country.

II. STATUS OF THE PEACE PROCESS

3. As described in my report of 4 June 1999, peace negotiations between the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF began on 25 May 1999 in Lomé, Togo, hosted and mediated by President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo in his capacity as Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The proceedings were supported by a Facilitation Committee consisting of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), ECOWAS and the Commonwealth of Nations under the chairmanship of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo, Joseph Koffigoh, assisted by my Special Representative, Francis Okelo. The negotiations benefited from the active involvement and support of a number of international and national observers, including representatives of the

Governments of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mali, Nigeria, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, ECOWAS and OAU, as well as members of the humanitarian community, including the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Sierra Leone. Representatives of Sierra Leonean civil society also provided support.

4. The Lomé Peace Agreement was signed by President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone and by Corporal Foday Sankoh on behalf of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, as well as by President Eyadema, President Compaore of Burkina Faso, President Taylor of Liberia, President Obasanjo of Nigeria and high-level representatives of Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, ECOWAS, OAU, the Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations.

5. My visit to Freetown on 8 July 1999 took place immediately after the signing of the agreement and allowed me to convey the hopes of the United Nations for its effective implementation and the return of lasting peace to Sierra Leone. During my recent travels in Africa, as well as during the OAU summit held at Algiers from 12 to 14 July 1999, I had the opportunity to hold extensive discussions with regional leaders on the peace process and on the ways and means to assist the people of Sierra Leone in achieving a lasting solution to the conflict in their country. I informed the Security Council of these discussions at its informal consultations of 27 July 1999.

Main provisions of the Lomé Peace Agreement

6. The agreement provides for the permanent cessation of hostilities, to be monitored at provincial and district levels through Ceasefire Monitoring Committees and, at the national level, through a Joint Monitoring Committee. Governance provisions include, inter alia, the transformation of RUF/SL into a political party and its access to public office; the creation of a broad-based Government of National Unity through cabinet appointments for representatives of RUF/SL; the creation of a Commission for the Consolidation of Peace to supervise the implementation of the peace agreement; the establishment of a Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development, to be chaired personally by the leader of RUF/SL, Corporal Foday Sankoh, with the status of Vice-President of Sierra Leone; and the establishment of a Council of Elders and Religious Leaders to mediate any disputes arising from differences in the interpretation of the agreement.

7. The agreement provides for the pardon of Corporal Foday Sankoh and a complete amnesty for any crimes committed by members of the fighting forces during the conflict from March 1991 up until the date of the signing of the agreement; a review of the present Constitution of Sierra Leone; and the holding of elections in line with the Constitution, to be directed by a National Electoral Commission. I instructed my Special Representative to sign the agreement with the explicit proviso that the United Nations holds the understanding that the amnesty and pardon in article IX of the agreement shall not apply to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

8. Regarding post-conflict military and security issues, the agreement stipulates the revision of the mandate of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG); a request for a new mandate for UNOMSIL; the encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants; the restructuring and training of a new Sierra Leone armed forces; and the withdrawal of mercenaries.

9. Concerning humanitarian, human rights and socio-economic issues, the agreement provides for the release of all conflict-related prisoners and abductees; the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons; the guarantee and promotion of human rights, including the establishment of a Human Rights Commission and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the safe and unhindered access by humanitarian organizations to all parts of the country; the security of humanitarian goods and personnel; and post-war rehabilitation and assistance to victims of war.

10. Periodic reviews of the implementation of the agreement will be undertaken by a Joint Implementation Committee, consisting of members of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace and the ECOWAS Committee of Seven on Sierra Leone, as well as the moral guarantors of the agreement, namely the Government of the Togolese Republic, the United Nations, OAU and the Commonwealth of Nations. The Joint Implementation Committee will be chaired by ECOWAS and meet at least once every three months. The first meeting of the Committee is planned to be held on 9 August 1999 in Freetown, on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting of the ECOWAS Committee of Seven on Sierra Leone.

11. In accordance with the agreement, the parties have requested ECOWAS to revise the mandate of ECOMOG to cover four areas: peacekeeping; security of the State of Sierra Leone; protection of UNOMSIL; and protection of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration personnel. The Government is to request ECOWAS to provide troops from at least two additional contributing countries. The Security Council is to be requested to provide assistance in support of ECOMOG.

12. At the same time, a timetable is to be drawn up for the phased withdrawal of ECOMOG, to be closely linked to the creation and deployment of restructured national armed forces. However, the agreement also makes reference to a "neutral peacekeeping force comprising UNOMSIL and ECOMOG" (article XVI). The parties also request the Security Council to amend the mandate of UNOMSIL to enable it to undertake the various provisions outlined in the agreement.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

13. Article XVI of the agreement calls for the encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process to start within six weeks from 7 July 1999. After the January 1999 invasion of Freetown, the World Bank and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom recommended that the original disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme be maintained only to deal with current ex-combatants, a second phase to be contingent on a peace agreement and the subsequent formulation of a revised disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan. The first phase of the programme was completed on 14 July with the discharge of 1,408 ex-soldiers housed in Freetown.

14. Prior to the signing of the peace agreement, representatives of the Department for International Development and the World Bank met with the delegations in Lomé to brief them on the basic assumptions underlying the revised disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, which is to assume responsibility for the needs of an estimated 33,000 to 40,000 combatants. The United Kingdom has pledged $10 million and the World Bank a further $9.1 million towards an estimated total requirement of $33 to $45 million for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities.

15. In addition, the World Bank has opened a multi-donor trust fund for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and has called on donors to contribute. A proposal under review by the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration envisages the establishment of about 10 demobilization sites to cover the main areas where the respective fighting forces are currently deployed.

16. Obviously, an effective programme will play a key role in the success of the Sierra Leonean peace process, given the vast proliferation of small arms, the fractured nature of the fighting forces consisting of the ex-Sierra Leone Army, the Civilian Defence Forces (CDF) and RUF/SL, the extent of foreign intervention and the supply of weapons. The agreement stipulates that the present Sierra Leone Army be restricted to their barracks and their arms and ammunition placed under constant surveillance by the neutral peacekeeping force (referred to in para. 12 above) during the process of disarmament and demobilization, and that UNOMSIL shall be present at all disarmament and demobilization locations to monitor the process and provide security guarantees to all ex-combatants.

Human rights

17. The Lomé Peace Agreement contains three articles addressing commitments in the area of human rights, including the full protection and promotion of basic civil and political liberties recognized by the Sierra Leone legal system and contained in the declarations and principles of human rights adopted by the United Nations and OAU (article XXIV). The other articles provide, respectively, for the creation of an autonomous quasi-judicial national Human Rights Commission and the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission not later than 90 days from 7 July 1999.

18. While the Human Rights Commission is designed to strengthen the existing machinery for addressing grievances of the people of Sierra Leone with respect to human rights violations, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will deal specifically with the question of human rights violations committed since the beginning of the armed conflict in 1991. It is intended to provide a forum for both victims and perpetrators to tell their stories and facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation. The Commission will also recommend measures for the rehabilitation of victims of human rights violations.

19. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be composed of a cross-section of the society of Sierra Leone, with the participation and technical support of the international community, and is expected to submit its report to the Government within 12 months after the commencement of its work.

20. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson, visited Sierra Leone on 24 and 25 June 1999, accompanied by a high-level delegation. In a statement dated 25 June 1999, the High Commissioner said that Sierra Leone required urgent international attention if it were to overcome its recent history of horrendous human rights abuses. In the same statement, she said that among the measures that could be taken in the short term were international assistance to document the human rights violations as a step towards accountability; increasing the number of human rights monitors in the country, and working with the Government and Sierra Leonean civil society to create a "human rights infrastructure" in the country. The High Commissioner, together with the Government of Sierra Leone, the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights, representatives of civil society and my Special Representative, adopted the Human Rights Manifesto, which contains and reaffirms wide ranging commitments for immediate and sustained promotion and protection of human rights, such as the non-recruitment in the armed forces of children under the age of 18 years. The manifesto commits the United Nations to provide appropriate support to Sierra Leonean human rights institutions, as well as for other elements of technical assistance.

Protection of children

21. The agreement also refers to the vulnerability of the children of Sierra Leone, who have suffered disproportionately and on an unprecedented scale throughout the war and who require special attention to ensure their protection and welfare during the consolidation of peace. The agreement acknowledges the children's entitlement to special care and protection of their inherent right to life, survival and development.

III. POLITICAL, MILITARY AND SECURITY SITUATION

22. The Government has taken steps to ensure the acceptance of the agreement in Sierra Leone, including a personal address by President Kabbah to Parliament when the agreement was submitted for ratification, and the development of a sensitization campaign by the Information Ministry based on the translation of the agreement into several local languages. Internationally, President Kabbah took the initiative to travel to Conakry and brief President Lansana Conte personally about the events in Lomé and the contents of the agreement. He continued to mobilize support at the OAU summit in Algiers from 12 to 14 July, which was attended also by Corporal Foday Sankoh.

23. The Parliament of Sierra Leone unanimously ratified the peace agreement on 15 July. On 20 and 21 July, it adopted legislation necessary for the implementation of the agreement. This legislation paved the way for the transformation of RUF/SL into a political party, for the participation of senior members of RUF/SL to hold public office and for the establishment of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development, to be chaired by Mr. Sankoh. Mr. Sankoh, for his part, indicated that he was ready to come to Freetown, pending arrangements for accommodation and security.

24. The military and security situation in Sierra Leone has improved significantly since the ceasefire agreement took effect on 24 May and has remained generally calm since the signing of the agreement. While some, mostly minor, ceasefire violations have occurred, including reports of rebel raids on villages, the number of incidents of open hostilities has dropped considerably. ECOMOG, CDF and RUF and former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) forces have generally remained within their areas of control.

25. RUF/SL and AFRC continue to dominate much of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. In the western parts of the country, their forces are concentrated in the areas west of the main highway from Freetown between Occra Hills, Port Loko and Kambia. The road to Guinea via Kambia is also controlled by RUF/SL and AFRC personnel, but they have assured UNOMSIL that an unhindered flow of traffic will be allowed.

26. A few military confrontations between CDF and RUF/SL-AFRC groups occurred in the northern, central and eastern parts of the country prior to the signing of the agreement, but there have been no reports of major combat since 7 July. However, both sides have continued to conduct troop movements throughout their respective areas of control. ECOMOG remains firmly in control of the Freetown peninsula and of a security cordon east of the capital, including the main highway providing access to Lungi and to Bo/Kenema, as well as Bumbuna and Kabala in the Northern Province.

27. ECOMOG continues to experience shortages of essential goods and supplies. The immediate requirements of ECOMOG include office equipment, various vehicles (trucks, ambulances, tankers), generators, communications equipment, helicopters, uniforms, medical supplies and other vital items. The Secretary-General of ECOWAS has requested me to impress on the Security Council and the international community the need to provide logistical and other necessary support for the deployment of additional ECOMOG troops, as envisaged in the agreement. The details of such support are still to be specified.

28. UNOMSIL has developed a system of reporting allegations of ceasefire violations and has shared all relevant information with the parties. To the extent possible, military observers have been dispatched to verify allegations in the areas accessible to them. UNOMSIL military observers have also been active in facilitating meetings between the parties on the ground in the accessible areas and have successfully mediated a number of disputes.

IV. HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS

29. In the wake of the agreement, unprecedented cooperation between RUF/SL, the Government and the aid community has put the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout the country within grasp for the first time in years. Despite initial delays, humanitarian assessment missions have been completed or are under way in the rebel controlled areas of Makeni, Kailahun, Buedu, Rokupr and Lunsar. Civilian needs have also been assessed in recently accessible Government-controlled areas, such as Yele, Port Loko, Daru, Kabala, Songo and the Rogberi-Masiaka corridor. These assessments have revealed acute shortages of basic, life-sustaining items such as food and medicine and subsequent

malnutrition, as well as outbreaks of dysentery, cholera, measles and meningitis.

30. As humanitarian access throughout the country increases, the caseload of those needing assistance - currently limited to 500,000 - is expected to triple. Needs have also increased in Government-controlled areas. Difficult overland access continues to cause delays in food shipments to areas such as Kenema and Bo. Combined with the onset of the rainy season, cases of severely malnourished infants nearly doubled in the last month. Obviously, as humanitarian agencies gain access to larger areas of the country, their need for adequate staffing and logistic support will increase significantly.

31. As the first tangible sign of the international community's commitment to the agreement, the rapid country-wide delivery of humanitarian assistance is a key aspect of the consolidation of peace. At present, the 1999 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal, which requested $27.9 million for humanitarian programmes in Sierra Leone, is only 26 per cent funded. It is hoped that donors will contribute generously to meet humanitarian needs in Sierra Leone.

32. The peace agreement may also bring an end to the circumstances that forced some 470,000 Sierra Leoneans to live in exile. In the coming months, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will develop a strategy for the repatriation of refugees and increase its capacity to monitor possible spontaneous returns, as well as the security, socio-economic and humanitarian conditions in the areas of return. These activities will be carried out in close coordination with other relief agencies as well as with the parties to the peace agreement.

V. FUTURE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE

33. The signing of the agreement requires UNOMSIL to perform significantly expanded as well as new tasks, in close coordination with ECOMOG, whose presence in Sierra Leone remains, in this critical period, indispensable. It is obvious that, in addition to the major disarmament and demobilization effort, the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement will require the presence of a substantial number of peacekeepers throughout the country, together with the deployment of additional United Nations military observers, in mutually supporting roles.

34. In accordance with the peace agreement, the mandate of ECOMOG will need to be revised by ECOWAS, in consultation with the United Nations and, as appropriate, with the parties. Among the issues that require detailed discussion are the division of labour between the United Nations and ECOWAS, the need to provide a credible level of security throughout the country (including the rebel-controlled areas), the appropriate size and composition of the required neutral peacekeeping force, the deployment of units to the various regions of the country and arrangements for logistical support.

35. Once these consultations, which are ongoing, have produced an understanding of the respective tasks, strength and mandates of ECOMOG and the United Nations,

I will be in a position to make comprehensive proposals to the Security Council concerning a new mandate and concept of operations for UNOMSIL. In the interim, however, it will be necessary to act expeditiously in order to offer maximum support to the parties and ECOMOG, and maintain momentum in the peace process. I believe that the most immediate and practical way of providing such support would be the deployment to Sierra Leone of additional United Nations military observers, along with the necessary equipment and administrative support. The number of UNOMSIL military observers required would increase to 210, based on an assessment of the tasks described below. It should be clearly understood, however, that the presence and operations of these observers alone would not be sufficient to ensure the implementation of the agreement. For this, it will be necessary to deploy large numbers of peacekeepers throughout the country. I would also propose that UNOMSIL be strengthened with additional civilian staff in the fields of political and civil affairs, as well as human rights, to allow it to cope with the increased responsibilities which flow from the agreement. An elaboration of these requirements is given below.

36. In order to support the effective functioning of an expanded mission, it is critical that the necessary administrative and logistical support services are made available. To this end, an adequate increase in administrative and technical personnel as well as resources should be provided. The estimated costs of the additional military and civilian staff, as well as of the required logistical support, will be submitted to the Council shortly, in an addendum to the present report.

Military aspects

37. As noted in paragraph 49 of my report of 4 June 1999 (S/1999/645), additional military observers are now being deployed to restore the strength of UNOMSIL to its authorized strength of 70 military observers. The current strength of UNOMSIL is approximately 50 military observers.

38. The envisaged tasks of an expanded UNOMSIL military observer component would be as follows:

(a) To strengthen and expand the contacts already established by UNOMSIL with RUF/SL troops in the countryside since the ceasefire agreement came into effect;

(b) To extend UNOMSIL's ceasefire monitoring activities to a wider geographical area, security conditions permitting;

(c) To strengthen and assist the Ceasefire Monitoring Committees and the central Joint Monitoring Committee established pursuant to the peace agreement to help maintain the ceasefire;

(d) To monitor the military and security situation in the country and report thereon to my Special Representative;

(e) To assist and monitor the disarmament and demobilization of combatants in areas where adequate security is provided;

(f) To work closely with humanitarian organizations to exchange information on security conditions with a view to ensuring the widest possible access for humanitarian assistance to populations in need;

(g) To work closely with human rights officers, as required, in their visits throughout the country;

(h) To maintain liaison and coordinate closely with ECOMOG;

(i) To assist in the preparation of plans for the deployment of neutral peacekeeping troops, as envisaged in the agreement.

39. The additional military observers would be deployed to Sierra Leone in a gradual manner. At present, it is envisaged that UNOMSIL military observers would maintain a strengthened headquarters in Freetown and would deploy to team sites initially in Lungi, Hastings, Port Loko and Bo. For the time being, these military observers would operate under security provided by ECOMOG. It would also be necessary to ensure enhanced logistical support for an expanded UNOMSIL. A key requirement would be the introduction of a second-line medical capability to provide basic and emergency health care. Such a capability would require up to 35 military (or civilian) medical personnel. It would also be crucial for an expanded UNOMSIL to have an aviation capability to provide 24-hour medical evacuation as well as daytime monitoring and observation.

Political and civil affairs

40. The Lomé Peace Agreement signed by the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone includes numerous requests for international involvement, specifically that of the United Nations, in implementing provisions contained therein. This would require a substantial increase in the role of UNOMSIL and, accordingly, in its human and administrative resources.

41. In view of the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the peace process and the increased responsibilities arising from an expanded UNOMSIL presence to assist the implementation of the peace agreement, it would be advisable to upgrade the level of that post. Accordingly, it is envisaged that the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will be expanded to include a deputy Special Representative and additional staff for coordination, public information and legal affairs.

42. The envisaged political affairs office of UNOMSIL would consist of up to eight officers and would be responsible for liaison with the parties; government ministers and parliament; United Nations programmes; non-governmental organizations; and provincial and district representatives of the Government of Sierra Leone. The political affairs office would also assist the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the development and implementation of the Strategic Framework for Sierra Leone (see para. 44 below).

43. The requirement for a civil affairs component derives from the need for UNOMSIL to participate in the various bodies charged with the implementation and monitoring of the agreement and to assist in the phased reintegration of members

of RUF/SL, the Sierra Leone Army and CDF into civil society. The civil affairs component, which would consist of 10 civil affairs officers, would maintain nine field sites located in Freetown, the three provincial capitals and major towns such as Kabala, Kailahun, Kambia and Koidu. Offices would also maintain liaison with provincial and district government representatives. In addition, the civil affairs component would also liaise with appropriate government bodies on matters relating to economic reconstruction and investment and monitor adherence to international law governing compensation in reference to article VII of the peace agreement. It is also envisaged that a small secretariat for the Joint Implementation Committee would be established to monitor respective areas of concern, mainly human rights, refugees and displaced persons, elections and education and health.

44. The successful implementation of the peace agreement will also require a coherent and comprehensive response involving the Government and its international and domestic partners. Following consultations with all relevant partners in the United Nations system, I have decided that a strategic framework be developed for Sierra Leone, encompassing political, assistance and human rights aspects. Through this framework a mutually reinforcing comprehensive political strategy and assistance programme would be developed. Its development and implementation is envisaged as a primarily field-driven exercise, led by my Special Representative working in close consultation with national and international partners. A small United Nations mission visited Sierra Leone from 14 to 19 June to help launch the Framework. As a first step, a steering group has been set up in Freetown, chaired by my Special Representative, with representatives of the concerned United Nations entities. The establishment and implementation of the strategic framework will be facilitated at Headquarters under the guidance of the Deputy Secretary-General.

45. With the signing of the peace agreement, the increased dissemination of information will be crucial in sensitizing public opinion after eight years of civil war. The present UNOMSIL information capacity should be expanded with three additional international staff and an appropriate number of local staff. The functions to be carried out include the production of radio programmes in indigenous languages for broadcast on the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service and other existing radio stations. United Nations radio programming for local distribution is also required. Consideration should also be given to video production for audiences in Sierra Leone, focusing on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, as well as on issues affecting the population relating to the agreement.

Human rights

46. The human rights component will continue to play a key role in the future operations of UNOMSIL and will strengthen its monitoring and reporting activities in all parts of Sierra Leone. This critical task will include a broad range of human rights issues that encompass the rights of women and children and economic and social rights. In particular, the human rights abuses suffered by women during the conflict will constitute a major focus of the work of human rights officers.

47. In support of the human rights provisions in the agreement, it will be necessary to expand the human rights component to enable it to cover all parts of the country, including the areas previously under RUF/SL control, to collect testimonies, document abuses and bring forward witnesses and survivors of atrocities. A thorough fact-finding process will be critical to the effective functioning of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other efforts to consolidate peace in Sierra Leone. In order to ensure that there will be appropriate accountability for serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, the Security Council may wish to consider various steps to address this question, including the establishment in due course of a commission of enquiry, as recommended to the Government of Sierra Leone by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Such a commission would investigate and assess human rights and humanitarian law violations and abuses perpetrated by all parties since the commencement of the conflict in 1991. At the same time, technical cooperation will have to be increased to ensure that the judicial system resumes operations throughout the country and that human rights training is extended to public office holders of RUF/SL. These additional functions will require a significant expansion in the current strength of the UNOMSIL human rights component to assist the parties in the implementation of the human rights provisions of the agreement.

48. It is envisaged that additional human rights officers will be deployed to the main provincial centres and towns to carry out comprehensive monitoring, fact-finding, documentation and analysis on the observance of human rights and international humanitarian law by all parties throughout Sierra Leone. Their co-deployment with military observers will also ensure adequate attention to human rights issues and child protection in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

49. Human rights technical cooperation programmes conducted by UNOMSIL, with support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, will be directed towards the following sectors: (a) human rights training and skills development; (b) promotion of the rule of law; (c) support to and capacity-building for human rights institutions, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and civil society; (d) promotion of child rights; and (e) mainstreaming of attention to gender rights. Generous financial assistance from the international community will be required for the implementation of these activities.

50. To enable it to carry out an expanded role, it is proposed that the present human rights component be augmented immediately by 10 international human rights officers, including two child protection officers.

Protection of children

51. The protection of the rights of children will require immediate and special attention during the process of disarmament and demobilization and beyond, given the particular needs of child combatants during their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The United Nations Children's Fund is playing a leading role, in close coordination with my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, in the protection of children and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers. Among the many other

pressing needs are the support of child victims of mutilations and sexual exploitation and the rehabilitation of primary health and educational services. Additional financial, material and human resources will need to be mobilized by the relevant agencies in support of these activities. A child protection adviser should be added to the Mission to ensure that these issues are dealt with in a comprehensive manner and are given due attention at the national and international levels.

VI. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

52. The signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front is a great step forward for Sierra Leone. It provides the Sierra Leonean people a unique opportunity to bring an end to the conflict, which has caused them untold suffering and has registered deeply in the conscience of the international community. Both sides are to be congratulated for showing the flexibility that has made this agreement possible. Credit is due also to the international community and, in particular, to ECOWAS, for their leadership in bringing both sides together and facilitating the conclusion of the peace agreement.

53. Special recognition is also due to ECOMOG. Its troops and, in particular, the Governments of Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea and Mali that provided them, are to be commended for their steadfast courage in the face of considerable hardship and sacrifice. ECOMOG can and should take pride in what it has achieved. I call upon the international community to provide strong and continuous support to this regional force so that it can maintain its critical presence in Sierra Leone. The main requirements of ECOMOG are listed in paragraph 27 above.

54. As in other peace accords, many compromises were necessary in the Lomé Peace Agreement. As a result, some of the terms under which this peace has been obtained, in particular the provisions on amnesty, are difficult to reconcile with the goal of ending the culture of impunity, which inspired the creation of the United Nations Tribunals for Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia, and the future International Criminal Court. Hence the instruction to my Special Representative to enter a reservation when he signed the peace agreement, explicitly stating that, for the United Nations, the amnesty cannot cover international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. At the same time, the Government and people of Sierra Leone should be allowed this opportunity to realize their best and only hope of ending their long and brutal conflict. During my short visit to Sierra Leone on 8 July 1999, I witnessed tremendous destruction, suffering and pain, particularly on the faces of the victims of wanton and abhorrent violence. I took the opportunity to encourage all Sierra Leoneans to seize this opportunity for peace, to rally behind the agreement, seek reconciliation, and to look and work towards the future.

55. By all accounts, the challenges ahead are daunting. Among these are the disarmament and demobilization of combatants, their reintegration into society, the restoration of State authority in territories now held by rebel forces, the necessity of addressing humanitarian needs throughout the country, the repatriation of refugees, the building of institutions and the healing of the

deep wounds caused by the civil war. Strict compliance with the terms of the agreement by both sides, as well as their supporters and all commanders and fighters in the field, is indispensable. The United Nations will, as is customary, exercise its responsibilities in an impartial manner, and calls on both sides to extend to UNOMSIL and ECOMOG their complete cooperation.

56. The international community and the United Nations have an important responsibility to assist Sierra Leone and to ensure that momentum is maintained in this process, especially in the critical phase immediately after the signing of the peace agreement. I therefore recommend that the Security Council approve, as an immediate first step, the provisional expansion of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), along the lines set out in paragraphs 33 to 51 above. As indicated in the present report, I hope to revert to the Security Council as soon as possible with an additional report on the situation in Sierra Leone, which will include recommendations for the mandate and structure of the enhanced United Nations peacekeeping presence that may be required in the country.

57. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to my Special Representative, Francis G. Okelo, the Chief Military Observer, Brigadier-General Subhash C. Joshi, and the staff and military observers of UNOMSIL for their tireless efforts and dedication to bring the difficult negotiation process to a successful conclusion and thereby continue to advance the peace process in Sierra Leone.

Annex

United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone: contributions as at 29 July 1999

	Military observers	Others[a]	Total
Bangladesh	2		2
China	3		3
Egypt	2		2
India	2	2	4
Jordan	2		2
Kenya	4		4
Kyrgyzstan	1		1
Malaysia	4		4
New Zealand	2		2
Pakistan	5		5
Russian Federation	8		8
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	8		8
Zambia	5		5
Total	48[b]	2	50

[a] Medical team.

[b] Including the Chief Military Observer.

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